



MESIVTA KESSER TORAH GENERAL STUDIES CURRICULUM OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

“GUIDING BOCHURIM TO SUCCESSFUL TORAH LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY”

Mesivta Kesser Torah is a local yeshiva that services the Baltimore community. The growth of our bochurim in Torah, Mitzvos, and Yiras Shamayim is of paramount importance to us. We engage our talmidim in the afternoon by showing them that this growth does not end when they close their Gemora. The truest test of a Ben Torah is how he applies the Torah to all parts of his day.

It is with this belief that we have designed our afternoon program. There are **seven components** to our unique curriculum. They allow our talmidim to refine their academic skills while growing into Bnei Torah who can impressively articulate themselves both in their speech and writing.

1. A TORAH LENS

The Torah is timeless and must provide the parameters through which we see and understand the world around us. Literature, history, and science present the ben Torah with values that are contrary to that which he learns in the morning. By teaching a comprehensive and intellectually stimulating curriculum through the lens of Torah, to both frame and respond to secular perspectives, talmidim will learn how to use the Torah to guide them through life.

2. MIDDOS TOVOS

By emphasizing middos tovos through a positive reinforcement system in the afternoon, the bochurim are taught to understand that their success is not contingent on academics alone, but on their overall attitude and derech ertz. This program is consistent with expectations during the morning and is reinforced by the hanhala.

3. EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

We live in a time in which computer skills are necessary for job attainment and performance. By using a series of technologies, including Chromebooks, Google Classroom, Google Documents, Typing Club, and Code HS, we offer our talmidim the opportunity to use technology in a constructive way. The skills the bochurim acquire through technology allows them to take greater care and responsibility for their work. Additionally, these skills allow the aspiring bnei Torah to professionally present their chiddushim and divrei Torah. A variety of filters and computer monitoring programs are used to ensure that all technologies are utilized in a kosher fashion.

4. PROJECT BASED LEARNING

A classroom should be a place of robust conversation where students realize their academic potential. To facilitate such an environment, our program heavily utilizes Project Based Learning (PBL). This method engages young minds in complex tasks while learning how to think critically and creatively. This is accomplished both through independent work and with peers. Students begin to take ownership of their work by feeling invested in their final product. PBL creates students who are excited about the material that they are learning.

5. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

No two talmidim are the same. Every bochur is different and learns in different ways. It is a priority of the hanhala that every talmid feel both intellectually challenged and supported by his teachers. With this recognition, our teachers provide alternative assignments and modified educational programs to allow each bochur to see progress in his work.

6. TALENTED AND DEVOTED TEACHERS

Our teachers are talented individuals and experts in their fields. They have degrees in higher learning and know how to manage a classroom in a way that allows the talmidim to improve their skills and feel a sense of accomplishment. Most importantly, we strive to employ bnei Torah to teach in the afternoon who can facilitate a curriculum which allows for the attainment of skills, knowledge, and growth in Torah, Mitzvos, and Yiras Shamayim.

7. SUPPORTIVE HANHALA AND VA'AD HA'CHINUCH

Our Rosh Mesivta, Menahel, General Studies Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, and Va'ad ha'Chinuch all work tirelessly together with the same goal of enabling the growth of talmidim in the morning to continue into their afternoon. As a team, the hanhala partners with teachers and parents to ensure the best academic program for each talmid.

MESIVTA KESSER TORAH - GENERAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	ENGLISH	SOCIAL STUDIES	COMPUTER SCIENCE
9 TH GRADE	Algebra I	Biology	Literature and Composition Through the 13 Principles of Rabbi Yisroel Salanter	World History	Typing Club and Google Suite Programs
	Algebra II				
	Computerized Math Remedial Program				
10 TH GRADE	Geometry	STEM	Literature and Composition Utilizing American Historical Fiction and the Themes of Responsibility and Freedom	American History	Programming I
11 TH GRADE	Trigonometry	Chemistry	Public Speaking and Composition Utilizing Parshas ha'Shovua and Yomim Tovim	US Government	Programming II
	Calculus				
12 TH GRADE	Business and Personal Finance	Conceptual Physics	Public Speaking and Composition Utilizing the 13 Ikarim and Yiddishe Hashkafa	Jewish History with a Focus on the Yeshiva Movement, Chassidus, and the Mussar Movement	Adobe In-Design
	Optional Course: Calculus II & III				

9TH GRADE

THE 9TH GRADE STUDENT WILL LEARN TO BE PROFICIENT IN

A. MATHEMATICS: There will be a three-tiered math curriculum available in the 9th grade:

A) ALGEBRA I

Algebra I is a fundamental math course. The course is designed to form a strong mathematical foundation to ensure success throughout high school and in future endeavors that require strong mathematical reasoning and critical thinking skills. Topics include: Pre Algebra Review, Basic Skills, Prerequisites, Basic Equations/ Multistep Equations, Rational Numbers, Word Problems, Basic Linear Equations, Systems of Equations/ Graphs, Inequalities, Polynomials, and FOIL/Factoring.

B) ALGEBRA II

Students that have taken Algebra I in middle school will take Algebra II in 9th grade. Topics include: Inequalities, Linear Equations and Functions, Complex Numbers, Solving Quadratic Equations, Products and Factors of Polynomials, Roots of Polynomial Equations, Logarithms, and Exponentials, and Solving Logarithmic and Exponential Equations.

C) COMPUTERIZED MATH PROGRAM

Students that are struggling with Algebraic concepts are offered a specialized Math program which will allow them to work on the skills they are having difficulty with on the computer. They will be held accountable to perform and excel. The ultimate goal would be to catch them up to the current 9th grade Algebra I course.

B. SCIENCE: BIOLOGY

The main goal of this course is to give an overview of the biological sciences. The students will learn about the basic cellular processes of life, genetics, human physiology, biological communities, and ecology. Through the use of laboratories, this class will teach students to make observations and write detailed laboratory reports. The course includes hashkafic discussion concerning the sciences of biology including the Theory of Evolution, spontaneous generation, and Creationism.

C. LANGUAGE ARTS: LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION UTILIZING THE 13 PRINCIPLES OF RABBI YISROEL SALANTER

The English language is crucial to the success of a student in today's world. Communicating with others is paramount to leading a successful Torah life in the outside world. Not only speaking the language fluently but also being able to convey one's thoughts in the written word is crucial. The English program appreciates the balance of being a ben Torah and having the tools one needs to successfully communicate with the world around him in all settings. The curriculum focuses on reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and grammar. This is accomplished by presenting the talmidim with short stories that will allow them to enhance their ability to write as well as grow as bnei Torah.

A) READING COMPREHENSION

The theme of this year is the “13 Middos of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter.” Each one of the middos will be the topic of the readings specific to the unit at hand. The middos include: emes, zrizus, charitzus, kavod, menucha, nachas, nikayon, savlanus, seder, anavah, tzedek, kimutz, and shetika. Each middah/unit provides talmidim with short stories and articles that present characters who have these characteristics or struggle with them. As well, a variety of literary devices will be taught through these readings. They include: irony, symbolism, allusion, allegory, syntax, and point of view.

B) VOCABULARY

There will be a vocabulary list for each reading. Talmidim will not be expected to merely memorize words. Instead they will learn how to define the words by using context clues. Once the proper definitions for each word are learned talmidim will be expected to utilize the new words in their writing.

C) WRITING

Writings will be based on the readings and will include both formal and informal styles. Every three units, marking the completion of three of Rav Salanter’s middos, the talmidim will be presented with an expository essay that will challenge them to create a thesis and present supporting material.

D. SOCIAL STUDIES: WORLD HISTORY

Students will go on a journey beginning with the Renaissance and concluding in the twentieth century. Events and topics will be covered that form the building blocks of modern day life. As well, students will explore how Jews responded to the moments of history that are being discussed. By doing this, students learn to train themselves to always look to their past through a Torah lens as a way to inform their present and future. Students will be challenged to analyze both primary and secondary documents as well as learn how to navigate the use of maps.

E. COMPUTER SCIENCE: TYPING CLUB AND GOOGLE SUITE PROGRAMS

It is important for today’s youth to know the basics of row typing so that they can have this necessary skill for whatever profession they choose to have. Starting already at the beginning of 9th grade the students are introduced to one of the top typing programs available, “TypingClub.com”. This complex program tracks the student’s progress and offers over 600 fun and exciting lessons aimed at teaching students how to master row typing. The second half of the year the students will be learning how to problem solve real-life situations using the aid of Google Docs, Spreadsheets, Slides, and other platforms.

F. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The students will attend a local facility biweekly where they will have access to a gymnasium. They are encouraged to work on cardiovascular exercises and to work with each other as a team while playing sports.

10TH GRADE

THE 10TH GRADE STUDENT WILL LEARN TO BE PROFICIENT IN

A. MATHEMATICS: GEOMETRY

The students will learn the Foundations for Geometry, Geometric Reasoning, Parallel and Perpendicular Lines, Triangle Congruence, Properties and Attributes of Triangles, Polygons and Quadrilaterals, Similarity, Right Triangles, and Trigonometry, Extending Perimeter, Circumference, and Area, Spatial Reasoning, Circles, Extending Transformational Geometry.

B. SCIENCE: STEM

STEM is an interdisciplinary curriculum that allows students to be exposed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEM teaches these disciplines using real-world applications. Some of the topics include: Physics, Electric Circuits, Bioengineering, and Linear, Surface, and Volume Measurements.

C. LANGUAGE ARTS: LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION UTILIZING AMERICAN HISTORICAL FICTION AND THE THEMES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM

By using the foundation established in 9th grade, students will continue to develop their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills. The content of the readings is intended to parallel the theme of the Social Studies class described below. By using historical fiction students will be able to focus on the details of the events they will be studying in history. The students will be reading novels this year as a way to learn to become more independent readers. The common themes of responsibility and freedom in the readings will present a doorway to hashkafic readings and conversations related to achrayus and cheirus.

D. SOCIAL STUDIES: AMERICAN HISTORY

Students will learn the foundations of U.S. civilization, starting from the colonial era, continuing through the American Revolution, the Civil War, the World Wars, Cold War, and contemporary American life. The students will also develop their knowledge of American geography. Whenever possible, American Jewish history and Torah values will be explored during the course.

E. COMPUTER SCIENCE: PROGRAMMING I

Computer science is a crucial component in today's ever-changing world of technology. Exposing the bochurim to programming will give them the opportunity to excel in this field. The yeshiva uses an online programming classroom called, "CodeHS". The bochurim will learn the coding language "Python". The CodeHS Introduction to Python with Tracy the Turtle course teaches students the basics of programming in the Python language. Tracy is a turtle that can be instructed with the use of various commands to draw scenes on a canvas. Students will learn Python commands, functions, and control structures by solving puzzles and writing creative programs for Tracy to follow.

11TH GRADE

THE 11TH GRADE STUDENT WILL LEARN TO BE PROFICIENT IN

A. MATHEMATICS: PRE-CALCULUS

The students will learn about topics in Algebra including polynomial, rational, and exponential functions to conic sections. Trigonometry concepts including the Law of Sines and Cosines will be introduced. Later in the year, the students will begin to be introduced to analytic geometry and calculus concepts such as limits, derivatives, and integrals.

B. SCIENCE: CHEMISTRY

Students will explore the fundamental principles of chemistry. This will include measurement, atomic structure, electron configuration, the periodic table bonding, gas laws, properties of liquids and solids, solutions, stoichiometry, reactions, kinetics, equilibrium, acids and bases, and nuclear chemistry.

C. LANGUAGE ARTS: PUBLIC SPEAKING AND COMPOSITION THROUGH PARSHAS HA'SHAVUA AND YOMIM TOVIM

The analytical and compositional skills that have been acquired over the previous two years will be expanded upon to teach the students how to develop well organized divrei Torah on Parshas ha'Shavua and Yomim Tovim. Students will focus on how to analyze a text, develop questions, present arguments, weave inspiring stories, and properly present their thoughts in writing. This innovative class will be team-taught between a local Rav and an English teacher.

D. SOCIAL STUDIES: U.S. GOVERNMENT

In this class, students will learn about the institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that constitute United States politics. Students will be exposed to the general concepts used to interpret national politics. There will also be an opportunity to explore local Maryland and Baltimore politics.

E. COMPUTER SCIENCE: PROGRAMMING II

The bochurim will continue developing their programming skills with other languages such as "Java" and "Javascript". Other modules may be used.

FOUR YEAR WRITING PORTFOLIO PROJECT

At Mesivta Kesser Program, students are provided with the skills necessary to develop their writing. Through expository essays, creative writing, research papers, and divrei Torah, the bochurim are taught to analyze information and present their ideas in an organized and well-written format. After four years at the mesivta each student will have compiled an impressive portfolio of writing. In 12th grade, the students will be asked to collect their writing, make edits, and learn how to create an impressive publication through Adobe In-Design.

Below is a sampling of the types of writings that will be included in the portfolio.

Class	Example of Writing
9th GRADE Language Arts	Expository essays covering short stories that span the themes of Rabbi Yisroel Salanter's 13 Middos.
	Creative writing essays that ask students to descriptively explore their imagination.
9th Grade Biology	The Systems of the Human Body and niflaos ha'Boreh attributed to each system.
10th Grade Language Arts	Expository essays delving into the themes of freedom, slavery, and responsibility in novels of American Historical Fiction.
	Extensively researched divrei Torah related to the Haggadah shel Pesach.
10th Grade American History	Extensively researched term paper about a chosen topic from American History.
11th Grade Language Arts	Well organized and thought-provoking divrei Torah covering Parshios ha'Shavua.
11th Grade U.S. Government	Research paper and project focusing on chosen Jewish communities in the United States.
12th Grade Language Arts	Profound essays delving into Ikarei Emunah and Taamei ha'Mitzvos.